Published by the City of Lafayette

Summer 1997
Vol. 7, No. 3

LAFAYETTE VISTAS

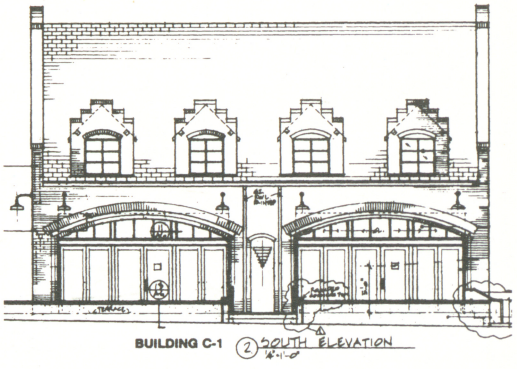
GREEN LIGHT FOR "BART BLOCK," MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

After months of intensive discussion, public hearings, meetings, revisions, and redesign, the City Council on May 27, 1997 approved development plans for the "BART Block," bordered by Mt. Diablo Boulevard, the BART station, and South Thompson Road. The project will include:

- 25,000 square feet of retail development along Mt. Diablo Boulevard
- 75 apartments in a pair of three-story buildings (parking beneath) on the east side of the creek
- 26,000 square feet of business or civic offices (with parking stalls and a two-story garage)
- retention and refurbishing of the Happy Valley Creek natural habitat which runs through the development.

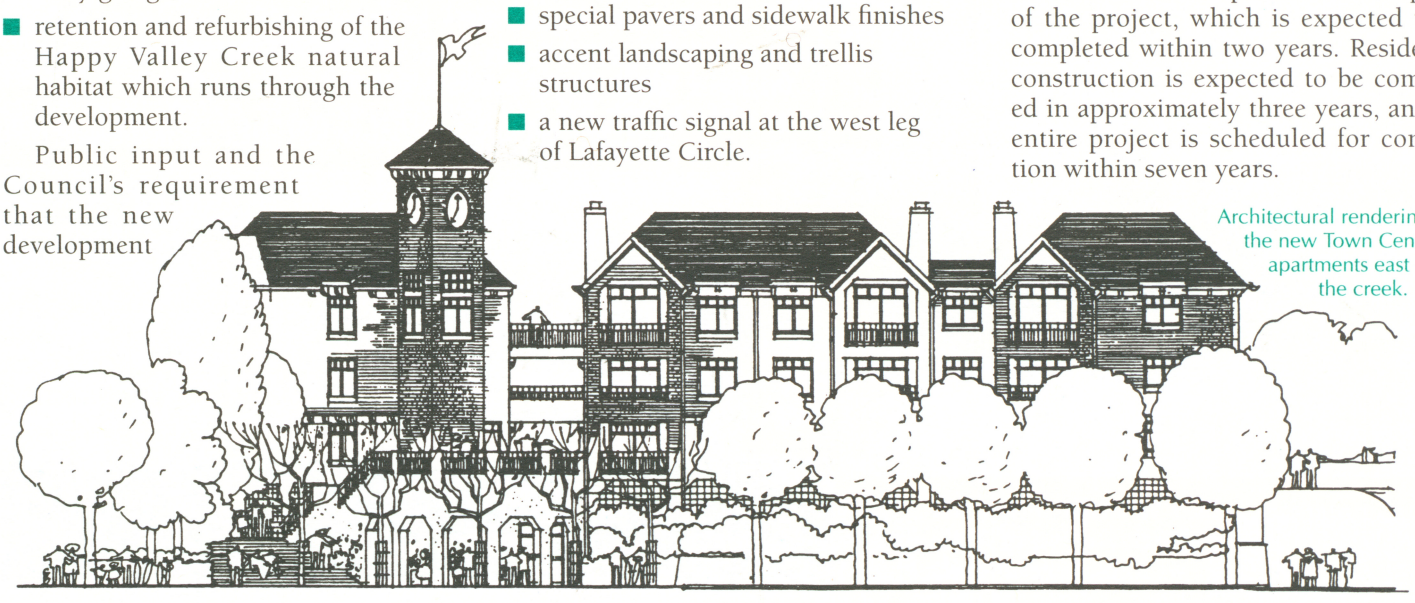
Public input and the Council's requirement that the new development comply with the specific plan for the site resulted in some specialized features for the project including:

- an attractively landscaped paved walkway running along the creek that will lend a scenic ambiance to the area and provide pedestrians with direct access to the BART station from Mt. Diablo Boulevard
- seating at the creek overlook
- renovation of the classic brick building in addition to construction of new commercial shops
- a plaza area for community events
- terraces with tables and chairs
- special pavers and sidewalk finishes
- accent landscaping and trellis structures
- a new traffic signal at the west leg of Lafayette Circle.



Architectural rendering for the renovation of the old Freddie's Pizza Building.

The retail sites along Mt. Diablo Boulevard will comprise the initial phase of the project, which is expected to be completed within two years. Residential construction is expected to be completed in approximately three years, and the entire project is scheduled for completion within seven years.



Architectural rendering of the new Town Center apartments east of the creek.

PG&E WORKS WITH CITY ON DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Throughout the summer, several improvements will be made to Mt. Diablo Blvd. There may be traffic lane closures at times, but special measures have been taken to keep this to a minimum. In the end, all of the unsightly overhead electric lines will be eliminated and downtown Mt. Diablo Blvd. will have an uniform attractive appearance with classic street lights.

PG&E began work on the underground trenching and street light replacement project between South Thompson Road and First Street on May 19. In mid-July, the City's street light contractor, Columbia Electric, will install underground conduits and foundations for the new street lights, which should be erected early this Fall.

Most of the daytime construction work will start at 5am and conclude at 3pm. This schedule is an intensive one, with an extended work day, to speed up the improvement project. To further minimize construction during peak traffic periods, additional work will occur at night from Oak Hill Rd. to South Thompson and at the intersection of Mt. Diablo Blvd./Moraga Rd. and Mt. Diablo Blvd./Oak Hill Rd.

If you have any questions, please call the information/voice mailbox for the project at (510) 284-1951, ext. 210.

Lafayette HEARTBEAT

A SPECIAL FOCUS ON COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Over the years, individual residents have faithfully provided many hours of volunteer time to improve the quality of life in our City. Beginning with this issue, VISTAS will occasionally acknowledge their generosity, and introduce you to just a few of them and their projects. If you know of a volunteer you think other residents should know about, please call the VISTAS editor at (510) 284-1968.

Last Spring, Lafayette-based independent software consultant Dave Briccetti spent more than 250 hours helping fourth graders at Happy Valley Elementary School develop an Internet homepage for kids about the Hale-Bopp Comet. The project was part of the media coverage about the Comet featured on NBC and ABC national news and KGO's "Log On" program. The project also led to the class' participation in two Comet-based programs at the Lawrence Hall of Science.

This was the second homepage project Briccetti directed for Happy Valley, and more are in the planning stages. "I truly believe that businesses should be involved in education, says Briccetti. "I really enjoy working with kids, and seeing that my efforts are having an impact."

For online information about the project contact **http://www.lafsd.k12.ca.us/hv/Hale-Bopp**. Briccetti was also instrumental in the development of the City of Lafayette homepage.

Q&A Lafayette Dialog

In this issue of Vistas we introduce an occasional column for dialog with residents on questions of general interest and discussion about Lafayette.

What has the City done to effectively maintain or enhance our community's quality of life since its incorporation in 1968? What should the City focus on as we move into the 21st century?

To reply, please contact the Editor at (510) 284-1968. We'll let you know the responses we receive in a subsequent issue.

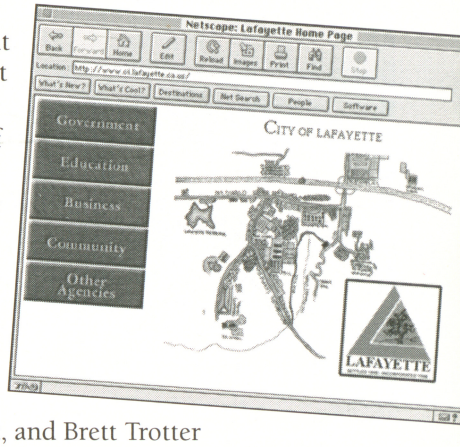
Lafayette Homepage Debuts

City Secures Spot on the Information Superhighway

The City of Lafayette Internet homepage went live on May 12. The homepage provides information about Lafayette's city government, school system, organizations, and business opportunities to Lafayette residents and people around the world with Internet access. We hope you'll take a moment to go online and find out for yourself all that it has to offer! Check the website at **www.ci.lafayette.ca.us**

The development of Lafayette's homepage was a cooperative effort involving the Lafayette School District, Chamber of Commerce, and the City, working through Lafayette Online, a community based computer collaborative sponsored by the Lafayette Arts and Science Foundation.

The City's volunteer development task force included former Planning Commissioner, Arthur Ungar, and City staff, joining efforts with:



- Dave Briccetti, software consultant and lead instructor of the student development team
- Bobby Besenfelder, Director of Lafayette Online
- Tim McCreery, UNIX web server site donator and consultant to the development team
- Pioneer student developers: Matt Grodin and Tim Fong (Acalanes Senior Volunteer Project)
- Current student developers: Cole Erickson, Steven Jones, Ryan Stark, and Brett Trotter
- Rich Holoch, developer of LEARN (Lafayette Emergency Action Response Network) material

The Lafayette homepage features a stylized map of the City designed by Cole Erickson, a student at Acalanes High School. Art Ungar used the Lafayette City emblem in a repeat pattern motif to create the unique background for the government pages.

In addition to directories of City Council, Commissions, and staff members, the Lafayette government pages provide immediate access to City Council agendas. The website is linked to other Lafayette homepages, including those of the schools and the Chamber of Commerce.

Community Survey Focus on New Library

At its June 9 meeting, Brad Senden, of the Center for Community Opinion, apprised the City Council of the results of a 400 person telephone survey regarding the City library. Almost everyone surveyed stated that they had visited the Lafayette library, and of the regular users:

- Two-thirds believe the current building is not big enough to meet local needs, and
- 81% would be willing to support a library bond for a larger facility which would allow for expansion of the library's book collection.

The survey also revealed concerns about convenient and safe access to a new library site, as well as the adequacy of parking.

The Council directed staff to begin developing strategies for a new and/or enhanced library and to prepare a financing proposal for review by the Council and the public.

Project Volunteer!

Volunteerism is a vital element of Lafayette. The Lafayette Senior Services Center, part of the Lafayette Community Center, has two established volunteer programs: SALE, "**Shopping Assistance for Lafayette Seniors**", and "**Seniors in the Schools**" – an inter-generational program where seniors assist children with their studies at our local elementary schools.

More volunteers are needed for these wonderful programs, as well as helping with Special Events, the Hi-nooners lunch program, classes & trips, and miscellaneous tasks in the Community Center office.

The Lafayette Senior Services Commission is now recruiting volunteers, young and old. This is a chance for you, your family and/or your friends to learn about the programs & activities offered at the Senior Center and those offered by the Recreation Department, and a time to get involved in community service. Just a few hours of your time makes a world of difference.

For more information, call the Lafayette Senior Services Center at 284-5050. For information about the "Seniors in the Schools" program, call Rosemary Shepard at 283-2084.

What is a Sesquicentennial Celebration?

A Sesquicentennial (ses-kwi-sen-ten-e-el) celebration marks a 150 year event. Yes, 1998 marks the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Elam Brown family who put down roots in Lafayette. If you would like to be part of the planning of the celebration events which will occur throughout 1998, please call Keith Blakeny of the Lafayette Historical Society at 284-2221.

Grow A Beautiful Garden ...the less toxic way!

Get a **free** garden guide full of useful information to help you grow a vibrant garden. Control pest and plant disease while using less-toxic methods for a cleaner environment.

Grow It has been developed for Contra Costa gardeners and provides valuable tips to help you...

- ✱ choose the right plants
- ✱ create healthy soil
- ✱ reduce toxic chemical use
- ✱ control pests naturally
- ✱ help the environment and save money

To request a copy, call

1-888-229-9473

3 City Council Member Vacancies

Three City Council seats will be up for election on November 4, 1997. Nomination Papers can be obtained from the City Clerk at 284-1968, and must be filed before 5:00 pm Friday, August 8, 1997. Candidates must be registered voters of Lafayette at the time their Nomination Paper is issued.

Around Town

Community Events

July 20 **CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE** – Lafayette's biggest annual affair and fundraiser for local charities and the Chamber of Commerce. Inspect beautiful vintage autos and bump into neighbors and friends. For information call the Chamber: 284-7404.

Until Aug 15 **T.O.Y.S.** – The 7th annual Organization for Youth Services "**Summer Jobs for Youth**" program. Area merchants, residents offering jobs for youth, and youth ages 13-20 call Rob Greenlee for information: 284-7137.

Thursdays **LAMORINDA TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL** – Develop your speaking, listening and leadership skills every Thurs. at 7:30 pm; St. Anselms Church, 682 Michael Lane. Information: Dan Casey: 284-7137.

Sept. 20-21 **LAFAYETTE 2ND ANNUAL ART & WINE FESTIVAL** – Stroll downtown, sip a fine cabernet, sample a micro-brewed beer, enjoy the work of local artists, listen to the sounds of live music. Call the Chamber for more info: 284-7404.

Oct. 24-26 **PERFORMING ARTS GALA CELEBRATION** – Showcasing local professional and pre-professional performing artists, including Center Repertory Theatre, Ca. Shakespeare Festival, Diablo Ballet and Lafayette's own Esprit de Corps Ballet Co. For info call the Chamber: 284-7404.

Oct. 26 **LAFAYETTE RESERVOIR RUN** – Join 1,500 runners and walkers on one of No. California's most beautiful courses. For registration information, call the Chamber: 284-7404.

City Parks & Recreation Programs

July 22, 29 **SUMMER FAMILY SHOWS** – Stanley School Aud., 3477 School St., 1pm, $2.50/person. Tix on sale:12:30pm. 7/22: **T-Bone!** Magic, juggling, unicycle, storytelling, puppets. 7/29: **Amazing Bubble Man!** For info, call Park & Rec: 284-2232.

Ace of Clubs Drug and Alcohol Free Entertainment for High School students. High School Music Club; Friday nights.

7/25: **Noah's Bagels:** features the Dingos and TBA – $2 cover; 8:30 – 11pm • 8/1: **Town Hall Theatre:** features **4 bands!** $4 cover; 8pm – Midnight • 9/5: **Town Hall Theatre:** features **4 bands!** $4 cover; 8pm – Midnight

Trips for Teens All trips for **6-12 grades** and include transportation & admission. Deadline: 10 days prior to each trip. For info call: 284-2232.

July 24: Raging Waters – $27
Aug 5: A's Game vs Whitesox – $20 (incl lunch)
Aug 7: Whitewater Rafting – $88 (incl lunch)
Aug 21: Santa Cruz Boardwalk – $27
Aug 22-24: Backpacking at Hetch Hetchy – $95
Aug 26: A's Game vs Yankees – $20 (incl lunch)
Aug 27: Magic Mountain – $36

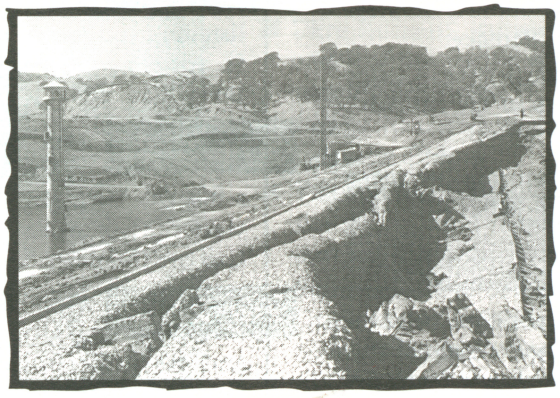
Historic Snapshots

Part 6:
Lafayette Reservoir

In this sixth installment of "Historic Snapshots," our ongoing series on the history of Lafayette, we highlight the construction of one of the most memorable features of the City – the Lafayette Reservoir.

As we read in the last installment of "Historic Snapshots," the severe droughts of the early '20s caused the Lafayette Improvement Club to encourage residents to tap into the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) water system. While other communities throughout the East Bay were working through the same process, EBMUD was developing the ambitious network of aqueducts, dams and storage facilities that provide Sierra drinking water for parts of Contra Costa and Alameda Counties today.

Although construction began August 1, 1927, the reservoir was not completed and filled until 1933, roughly four years behind schedule. Ironically, it was unusually heavy rains that initially stalled progress. Then, on September 27, 1928, when the project was eighty percent complete, the earthen dam began to slide on its foundations, opening great cracks in the reservoir bed as shown below. Photo: EBMUD



After heavy rains, cracks began to appear (as shown here), causing construction to be stopped for three years.

The workers used teams of horses and gasoline-driven vehicles to build the dam that forms the reservoir. Many local residents were part of the effort, including the late Leo J. Coleman, Sr., who reminisced, "Our contractor was working at night on the two ends of the dam. It was pitch dark as I walked across, and my knee hit something which wasn't supposed to be there. I tumbled down the face of the dam, which was quite steep, and for a while I was pretty groggy. When I was able, I climbed back up to a place where a concrete apron had been poured over a rock base. There was obviously something wrong. Feeling around, I found the apron was now four feet up in the air."

The incomplete dam continued to shift for the next ten days. Construction was at a standstill for the next three years, but in 1932, engineers and geologists who had been watching for additional movement determined that the shifting had abated in 1928. A consulting board recommended that the dam be redesigned to be quite a bit wider than the original plan. Rather than increase the height of the dam, the ratio of height to width was cut by about half, widening and reinforcing the existing structure, and also reducing future storage in the reservoir by about half. This explains why the top of the dam is so high above the water level.

Today the dam stands 140 feet high and stores 4,250 acre feet of water. The paved walking path that circles the reservoir travels the crest of the dam at 465 feet above sea level. In 1966 the Lafayette Reservoir became a recreation area operated by EBMUD. The first trout were planted in the reservoir in 1969, and many thousands have been planted every year since. In addition, the reservoir today contains bluegill, black bass, black crappie, and several types of catfish. Although swimming is not allowed, the Lafayette Reservoir is open to the public all year for fishing, boating, picnicking, hiking, and biking.

Photos provided by and printed courtesy of the Lafayette Library Historical Archives.
Thanks to Bill Wakeman and the Lafayette Historical Society for their ongoing contributions to this series.

City Directory

Leave your Council Members a message on the City's voice mail system!
Call 299-3232

Officers		EXT.
Donald L. Tatzin	**Mayor**	**274**
Anne Grodin	**Vice Mayor**	**273**
Judy Garvens	**Council Member**	**272**
Erling Horn	**Council Member**	**271**
Jay Strauss	**Council Member**	**270**

For messages to **all** Council Members: **907**

The City Council meets at 7:00 pm on the second and fourth Monday of the month at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road.

Staff Contacts

Steven B. Falk	**City Manager**
Rebecca Lee	**Admin. Srvs. Director**
Niroop K. Srivatsa	**Comm. Dev. Director**
Tony Coe	**City Engineer**
Mike Henn	**Planning Serv. Mgr.**
Jennifer Russell	**Parks and Rec. Director**
Vacant	**Public Works Serv. Mgr.**
Sue Jusaitis	**City Clerk**
Mike Ilg	**Police Services Mgr.**
Juliet Shanks	**School Bus Analyst**

City Offices and Police

Street Address:	**3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 210**
Mailing Address:	**P.O. Box 1968 Lafayette, CA 94549-1968**

City Telephone Numbers

Administration:	**284-1968**
Engineering:	**284-1951**
Planning:	**284-1976**
Parks and Rec:	**284-2232**
Public Works:	**284-1968**
Senior Services:	**284-5050**
Police Business:	**284-5010**
Police Emergency:	**911**
Voice Mail System:	**299-3232**

LAFAYETTE VISTAS

is published for the residents of Lafayette and reports on issues, people and events that affect our city. As a member of this community, you are encouraged to contact us with your questions and comments. We request all correspondence be sent to:

Rebecca Lee, Editor, Lafayette Vistas
City of Lafayette
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510-284-1968 • FAX: 510-284-3169
On-Line: www.ci.lafayette.ca.us

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